Inverhuron Provincial Park

Management Plan

Ontario
Ministry of Natural Resources

We are pleased to approve the Inverhuron Provincial Park Management Plan, as official policy for the management and development of this park. The plan reflects this Ministry's intent to protect natural and cultural features of the Inverhuron Provincial Park and maintain high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for both residents of Ontario and visitors to the Province.

Regional Director
Southwestern Region

Director, Parks and
Recreational Areas Branch

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Inverhuron Provincial Park is located on Lake Huron off Highway 21, 14.5 kilometres northeast of Kincardine (Figure 1). Development of the 289 hectare park began in 1956 and the first summer of operation was in 1959. With construction of the Bruce Nuclear Power Development adjacent to the park, it became necessary because of safety and security reasons for the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario to purchase the park. In 1973 a 999 year lease was signed granting the Ministry of Natural Resources permission to continue operating the park as a day-use area and the campground was to be phased out by 1976.

The park is located on a former lake plain associated with Lake Nipissing which was created at the end of the last glaciation period. The result is a generally flat topography with some rolling sections. Interesting topographic features include the former glacial lake shoreline and a sand dune system. Inverhuron is underlain by Palaeozoic sedimentary rocks of the Middle Devonian Detroit River Group which are approximately 370 million years old.

Other than Lake Huron, the most significant hydrological feature is the Little Sauble River, which crosses the park to empty into Lake Huron at the park's southern boundary.

Most of the vegetation is in some form of early successional stage due to logging, clearing and other activities of man prior to park establishment. The park contains many sites of prehistoric and historical interest which span at least 3,000 years from the Archaic Indians to European settlement.

Inverhuron is a day-use park which includes a one-half kilometre long beach and provides approximately 150 picnic tables and parking for 300 cars. Other facilities include a picnic shelter, change house, washrooms and a boat launching ramp.

1.1 Relationship to Bruce Nuclear Power Development

Immediately north of the park (Figure 2) is the Bruce Nuclear Power Development (BNPD). The site presently consists of the Douglas Point Generating Station, Nuclear Generating Stations - Bruce A and Bruce B and two heavy water plants.

East of the BNPD is the proposed Bruce Energy Centre which is being designed to utilize excess steam from the BNPD as an energy source for industrial and agricultural users. When completed, the Bruce Energy Centre will encompass approximately 240 hectares with development phased in over a period of years.

It has been concluded in a recent study[1] that the Bruce Energy Centre would not justify development of a new port in the area until at least after 1992.

In addition to normal park operating policies the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Hydro have agreed to conditions for operating Inverhuron Provincial Park. The conditions are listed below and include those specified by the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada in licencing heavy water plants. The conditions for the most part, relate to safety considerations in the event evacuation of the area should ever be necessary. The conditions are:

- the park will be open during the Victoria Day to Labour Day operating period. For specific projects or activities some supervised exceptions will be considered

- public access only between sunrise and midnight provided that staff at the Bruce Heavy Water Plant has knowledge of the use of the park during hours outside of the posted operating hours and arrangements are made with the park superintendent for opening, clearing and closing the park

- no overnight camping

[1] Marshall, Maclin, Monoghan Ltd; 1983. Feasibility Study for the Development of Marine Transportation Facilities - Bruce Energy Centre. Toronto, Ontario.

FIGURE 1

REGIONAL SETTING

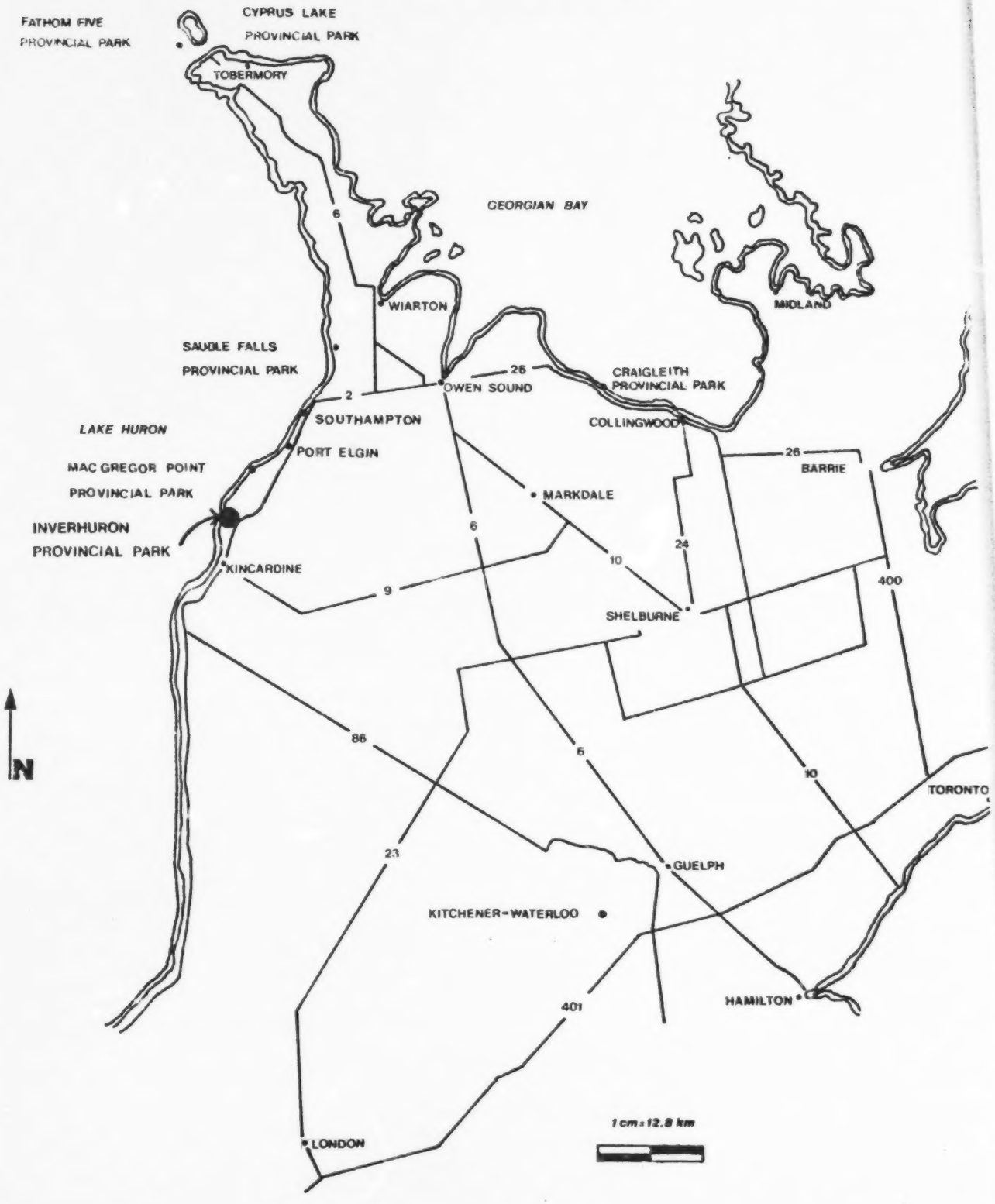
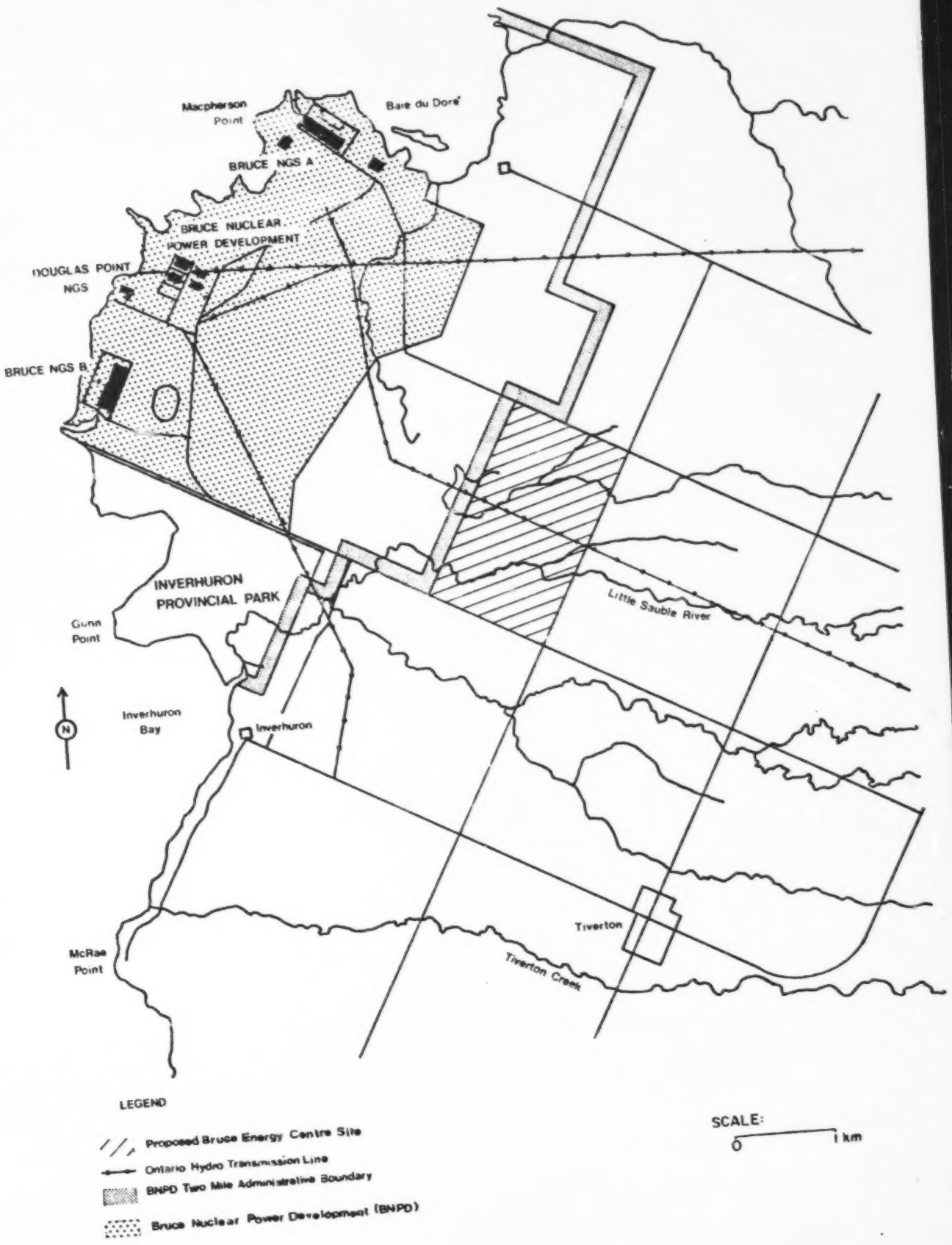


FIGURE 2

LOCAL SETTING



- public access confined to the beach at Inverhuron Bay, the adjacent picnic areas and their access road

- adequate warning signs posted and maintained

- maintain pedestrian access in the south end of the park for the village of Inverhuron

- there will not be any promotion of the park

- Ontario Hydro is responsible for major maintenance items and capital expenditures including signing and buildings

- the Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for daily operations and maintenance

Should the safety considerations be lessened, then expanded use of the park will be considered.

2.0 PARK POLICIES

2.1 Classification

Inverhuron Provincial Park is classified as a Recreation class park. It provides day-use recreational activities that are compatible with the safety precautions required by the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada and Ontario Hydro.

2.2 Goal

To maintain and operate Inverhuron Provincial Park so as to provide the highest possible quality day-use recreation experiences within any environmental, safety and security constraints.

2.3 Objectives

Due to the special relationship of Inverhuron Provincial Park to the BNPD, Inverhuron can only partially contribute to the objectives of recreation class provincial parks. Specific objectives for Inverhuron Provincial Park are as follows.

2.3.1 Protection

To protect a regionally significant natural environment that incorporates natural, cultural and recreational features.

Two natural environment (restricted access) zones are designated to provide adequate buffering from the BNPD for safety requirements and to protect significant natural and cultural features. Documented findings and research indicate that Inverhuron contains one of the most significant historical sites in Ontario. Appropriate management policies will be formulated to protect the natural and cultural attributes of the park.

2.3.2 Recreation

To provide day-use opportunities in an area of outstanding recreational potential associated with a natural environment.

The park will annually provide day-use opportunities. Activities will include picnicking, swimming and access to fishing and boating.

It may be necessary in the future to charg a day-use fee to help defray operating expenses and improve maintenance.

2.3.3 Heritage Appreciation

To provide opportunities for appreciation of Inverhuron's natural environment and cultural heritage through interpretation and education within the safety and security constraints.

Appreciation which is compatible with the safety precautions and complementary to the protection of the natural and cultural resources will be permitted.

Information concerning significant natural and cultural features will be provided through the visitor services program by means such as self-use exhibits.

2.3.4 Tourism

To provide visitors with day-use opportunities to discover and experience the distinctive environment of the park.

Inverhuron provides day-use opportunities for travellers, local residents, cottagers and patrons of nearby campgrounds.

2.4 Zoning

Two types of zones (Figure 3) are designated to guide the management of the park: two natural environment zones and one development zone.

2.4.1 Natural Environment Zones (Restricted Access)

These zones define the areas within the park which are restricted from public access. No recreational activity or development can occur in these zones.

NE-1 Holmes Bay Area (226 hectares) contains a large amount of coniferous forest plus a well defined series of gravel ridges which represent the storm beaches of post glacial levels of Lake Huron. A few historical sites are located in this zone.

NE-2 Little Sauble River Area (53 hectares) contains sand dunes with varying degrees of vegetation as well as sandy areas with coniferous forest. Numerous historical features such as the old village site of Inverhuron, a pioneer cemetery and Indian sites are located throughout this zone.

2.4.2 Development Zone

One development zone (10 ha) has been designated which includes the access road from the county road and all the developed recreational facilities in the park at Inverhuron Bay.

The zone includes access roads, parking lots, picnic area and the beach area. Facilities include washrooms, change house, picnic tables, picnic shelter, fire pits and a boat launch.

Recreational activities include angling, boating, picnicking, swimming and passive activities.

3.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The park will be managed in accordance with the agreement between Ontario Hydro and the Ministry of Natural Resources and the general planning and management policies for recreation class provincial parks. Specific direction, where needed to meet requirements specific to Inverhuron is provided below.

Although the policies are presented in separate categories, all planning and management will recognize that the components are inter-related and that an integrated approach will be required in order for the park to achieve its objectives.

3.1 Water

No activities will be permitted which disrupt the rainbow spawning run or the habitats of other fish in the Little Sauble River.

3.2 Vegetation

Active forest fire control will be carried out to protect the park values and adjacent Inverhuron Village and BNPD.

All vegetation management including control of insects and forest diseases, will be directed by management guidelines that support objectives related to visitor safety, aesthetics and conservation of the natural and cultural values of Inverhuron. Forestry activities, other than for these reasons, will not occur.

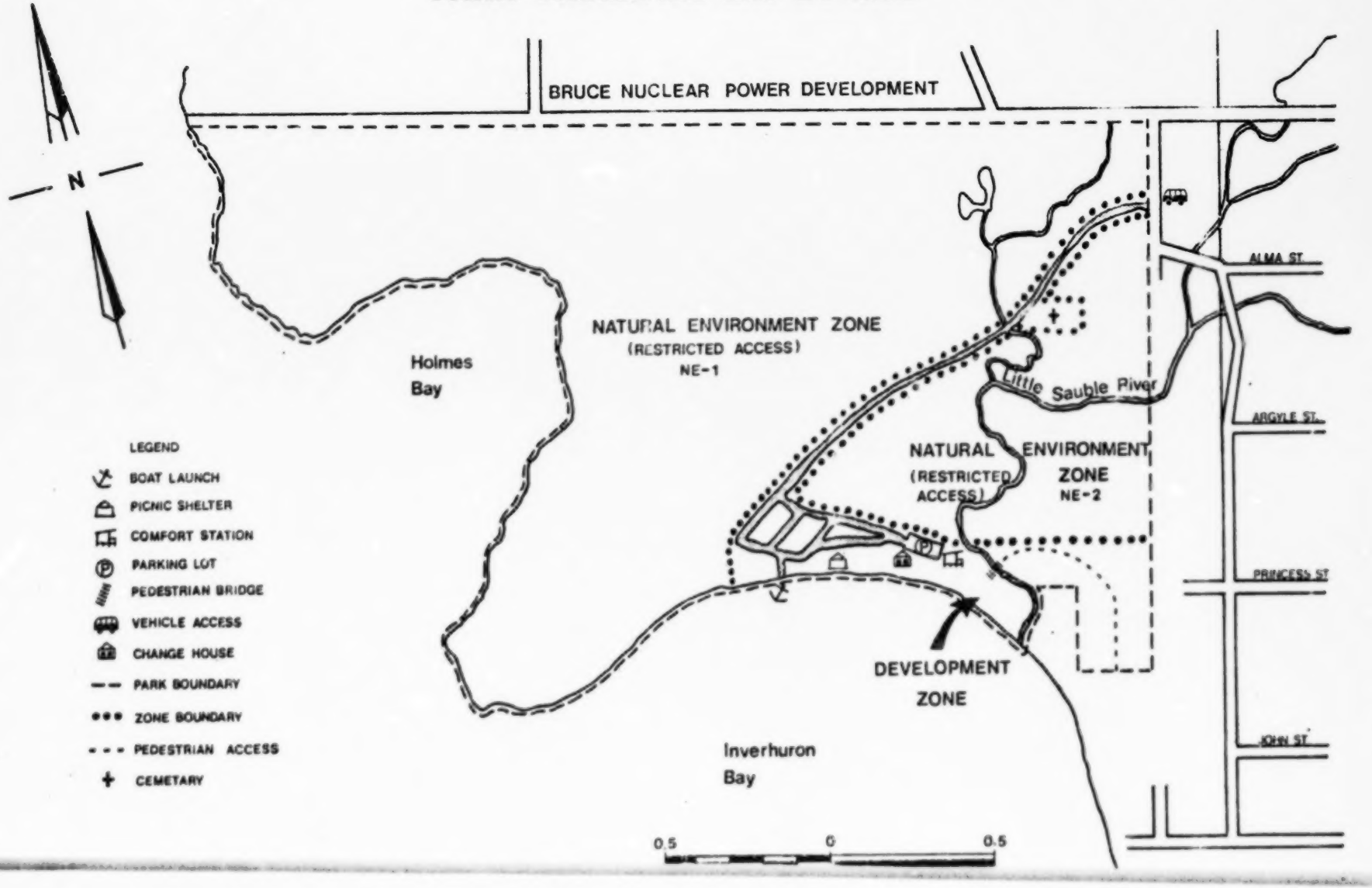
Forest or shrub rehabilitation and reforestation will be undertaken in areas to stabilize sand dunes and to maintain existing vegetation cover. Any rehabilitation work undertaken will use only natural species representative of the local area environment.

3.3 Wildlife

A "no hunting" policy will be continued. Trapping of nuisance animals will be carried out as required to protect park values.

FIGURE 3

PARK FACILITIES and ZONING



3.4 Cultural Features

Archaeological excavation for research purposes will be allowed to gain additional information about the park's historical resources. Persons and institutions conducting research will require a permit as stipulated in The Ontario Heritage Act, administered by the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. Permission must also be granted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Hydro.

For the time being, burials may be allowed in the pioneer cemetery for compassionate reasons. However, in the long term the Ministry intends to close and maintain the cemetery according to The Cemeteries Act.

A historical resources and research file will be maintained by the park superintendent to catalogue what work has been done and what work is still required.

3.5 Research

Research into other aspects of the park, such as earth science features will require permission from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Hydro.

4.0 CLIENT SERVICES

4.1 Visitor Services

A high-quality, low-keyed, self-use facility program will be developed. The interpretive program theme will relate to the provincially significant archaeological and historical resources of the indigenous and European peoples who were once present in this area.

A visitor services plan will be prepared.

4.1.1 Communications

Park visitors will be provided with information concerning the park resources, management and facilities and nearby points of interest. Self-use facilities such as information displays and signs will be made available to the park visitor.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT

The overall development strategy for the park is one of maintaining the status quo. Access restrictions to a large percentage of the park and concerns by Ontario Hydro and the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada on minimum usage of the park precludes any form of expansion or promotion of facilities.

5.1 Day-Use Area

Picnicking, beach related and other day-use activities will occur in the development zone along Inverhuron Bay.

The park will operate as a day-use park only, with hours as posted by the superintendent. Official operating season is from Victoria Day (May 24) to Labour Day (early September).

Facilities provided will include picnic tables, picnic shelter, access road, parking lot, boat launching, washrooms and change house.

5.2 Vehicles

Motorized vehicles will only be allowed on access roads and designated parking areas in the development zone.

Motorized vehicles will only be allowed in the restricted zones for Ontario Hydro and Ministry of Natural Resources authorized maintenance/safety purposes.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The management plan will be reviewed in 10 years following its approval, or earlier if the need arises. As funds and priorities permit, additional research will be conducted on natural and cultural values, and recreational user demands to provide a basis for future reviews of the plan.

7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The following steps were taken to incorporate public consultation in the preparation of the Inverhuron Provincial Park Management Plan.

A preliminary draft management plan was presented to Ontario Hydro staff from the BNPD on March 9, 1984. Written comments from Ontario Hydro were received on March 29, 1984.

A mailing list was prepared consisting of local residents, interest groups, municipalities, government agencies, members of both the federal and provincial parliaments plus other individuals or groups that had participated in previous planning exercises. One hundred copies of the draft management plan were mailed out on April 16, 1984 with fourteen responses being received by the May 11, 1984 deadline for public comment.

A news release was mailed out on April 16, 1984 informing people of the preparation of the management plan and that copies of the draft plan were available for review at MacGregor Point Provincial Park and the Owen Sound District Office.

Public comments were summarized and those concerns relating to the safety requirements for the heavy water plant were discussed on May 30, 1984 with Ontario Hydro staff from the BNPD. Owen Sound District staff met with members of the executive from the Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association and a representative from Ontario Hydro on June 9, 1984 to discuss the brief prepared by the Association.

Based upon Ministry of Natural Resources staff discussions and external input, the final plan was prepared, approved and copies sent to Ontario Hydro, the Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association, municipality, members of parliament and other interested parties.